

Memorandum

To: Planning Commission

From: Rachel Van Winkle, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation Department,
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Date: December 2, 2016

Subject: Briefing: Redmond's Community Centers

MEETING PURPOSE:

The purpose of this briefing is to update the Planning Commission on Redmond's Community Centers. In summary, Redmond's four existing community centers are facing some challenges. The City is seeking guidance from the community about the future of these centers and how the City can provide facilities that meet current and future programming needs with flexibility to respond to our growing and changing community.

This briefing is informational; no amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as a result of this project are proposed or anticipated at this time. The purpose is to update the Planning Commission on this topic for general awareness.

BACKGROUND:

Redmond's four existing community centers are in need of replacement or repair.

- The Redmond Pool at Hartman Park is now on maintenance "life support" with City Council's investment of \$100,000 for repairs.
- Lake Washington School District needs space for the growing school population and has terminated the City's lease at the Old Redmond Schoolhouse as of June 2018.
- The Old Fire House Teen Center is valued for its character and programs and has failing building systems and structure.
- Renovations are needed at the Redmond Senior Center to address aging mechanical systems and building exterior and provide for expanding programs.

In addition, the City has been evaluating the feasibility of a cultural arts facility and conducted a study in 2015 that recommended the program, size, general locations and operating plan for such a facility. The community centers are also an important part of an ongoing citywide strategic facilities planning effort to provide direction on how to best operate, maintain, upgrade and replace the city's 26 core buildings now and in the future. Input on the community centers will

assist in developing citywide alternatives and inform citywide facilities priorities and project phasing over the next 30 years.

The City Council is seeking significant community involvement in the process of evaluating options to resolve these challenges and opportunities. It is important to the City Council that decisions on how to move forward on Redmond's community centers reflect the hopes, desires and values of the community.

PROJECT PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Redmond's Community Centers project is to conduct an informed community conversation across Redmond. Through this conversation, the City Council seeks to gain an understanding of community perspectives and aspirations for Redmond's community centers. The city's four centers are all facing challenges which will require decisions about future investments. The City Council seeks to understand the will of the community regarding these centers, including:

- What kinds of indoor activities are desired now and in the future?
- Should those activities be provided to the community in one or more centers?
- Where are the best locations for those activities?
- What are the options for addressing the challenges?
- When and how to achieve these goals?

PROJECT APPROACH:

The City contracted with EnviroIssues, a leading public affairs consulting firm, to:

- Finalize plans for a stakeholder group
- Provide third party facilitation of the stakeholder group
- Develop a communication strategy
- Manage the education and awareness campaign
- Facilitate community conversations on this subject
- Develop a report that summarizes the community conversations and stakeholder group recommendation to City Council.

This work is broken down into the following phases:

- **Stakeholder Group** – A stakeholder group has been convened to provide their perspectives and to be a bridge to the broader community to support the community conversation. The group represents the broad interests of the four existing community centers and the cultural arts, it also represents the demographics of the community and has a broad geographical reach across the city and unincorporated Redmond. The stakeholder group will become informed community representatives and provide access

and entree to community groups and cohorts. The stakeholder group will listen to and digest feedback from the community and develop recommendations for the City Council that reflect the community's insights, expectations, hopes and aspirations for how to address Redmond's Community Centers' challenges.

- **Awareness & Education** - Inform the community about, and stimulate interest in, upcoming conversations about Redmond's Community Centers with a multi-media approach. Communication strategies include traditional city newsletters and press releases, a branded website, social media, paper collateral, and word of mouth through our stakeholders to engage with community groups in person. Education will include information about the master planning work for recreation buildings, facilities condition assessment, facilities strategic plan, city financial information, and more.
- **Conversations with the Community** - Identify community values and preferences regarding Redmond's Community Centers through online input, intercept surveys, and by facilitating community conversations in locations such as community/neighborhood associations, civic organization meetings, coffee shop drop-ins, city community centers, faith centers, etc.
- **Community Spoke and We Listened** - Results from community conversations, intercept surveys, focus groups, social media posts and other input will be summarized in a "Community Spoke – We Listened" summary with input from the Stakeholders Group.

Upon review of the Community Spoke – We Listened summary, City Council may decide to continue to consider the feasibility of alternatives in a second phase of work that would include refining the scope, scale, program and location of such facility/ facilities. Depending on decisions that result from community and City Council recommendations, the stakeholder group may be asked to continue their work, advising the Parks and Trails Commission and City Council on next steps in the Redmond's Community Centers process.

STATUS UPDATE/NEXT STEPS:

EnviroIssues, stakeholders and city staff are in the education and awareness phase of work - meeting with community groups, sending articles to newsletters and email groups and social media, and maintaining the website, posters, and yard signs throughout the city. The team is preparing for community conversations in January – February 2017.

The Planning Commission can help spread the word by sharing brochures and the city website, RedmondsCommunityCenters.com with friends and neighbors. Also, if Commissioners have a community or neighborhood group that we should meet with, please let us know.